



Transforming Washington Communities

Community Transformation Grant Success Story

About the Grants

Transforming Washington Communities

Heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes are the leading causes of death in Washington State. Many of us have lost a loved one prematurely to one of these preventable diseases. Healthy choices play a big part in preventing these diseases.

Unfortunately, not everyone has the same available options. Where we live and work often plays a major role in how easy or hard it is to make a healthy choice on any given day.

Our goal is to make the healthy choice the easy choice everywhere in Washington. National health care reform can help change this. The Affordable Care Act invests in prevention, which evidence shows will improve health and save our country a lot of money over time.

Community Transformation Grants

The Prevention and Public Health Fund includes an initiative called the Community Transformation Grants, which helps states tackle the growing need for chronic disease prevention. Our state received six awards one of which was to the Washington State Department of Health for \$3.2 million.

Walking the Talk: A Road to Healthier Eating

Washington State Department of Health, the Governor's Office and other state agencies are working to make the healthy choice the easy choice, especially where people work.

Almost three quarters of adults in Washington are overweight or obese and estimate state that obesity contributes to nearly 21 percent of all medical spending. Policies related to healthy food, activity and behaviors, disease prevention, and exposure to smoke, can significantly influence the environments in which people work. This, in turn, affects their adoption of healthy lifestyles. Approximately half of Washington adults eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. This shows room for improvement. Implementing policies that encourage healthy meals and snacks can help with this.

An effective and comprehensive worksite wellness program can improve the health, productivity, quality of life, and life expectancy of a workforce. Access to healthy foods is one part of a complete program. State agencies in Washington are making great strides to bring healthier food options to the workplace.

Where we started this journey

National health authorities have expressed a need for large-scale policies and population-based strategies to improve health. This includes nutrition-based food and beverage guidelines to increase the availability of and demand for more healthful products. These efforts support individual-based approaches to achieve broad and sustained impact. Washington State was one of the first states to enact a food and beverage service policy for state agencies, their employees, and custodial populations.

In 2011 and 2012, Representative Laurie Jenkins (D) introduced bills (HB1801 and HB 1321) to the House of Representatives that required each state agency to develop and implement food-purchasing and service policies for meetings, events, vending, and for those in direct custody of the state.

In late October 2013, Governor Jay Inslee signed [Executive Order 13-06: Improving the Health and Productivity of State Employees and Access to Healthy Foods in State Facilities](#). The Executive Order (EO) was based on the earlier drafted bill. The EO required that 39 executive branch agencies adopt and implement



food and beverage service policies that meet state nutritional guidance based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This executive order will affect an estimated 67,000 people statewide. It applies to food and beverages sold to employees or served at meetings and events. This also applies to food and beverages provided by state agencies to students and custodial populations.

We can't walk this road alone

Community level changes require collaboration. One group cannot make broad changes in healthy eating alone. We engaged private and public partners along with key stakeholders in the development and implementation of this initiative. Coordination of efforts and partnerships were established early and played a significant role in the success of this work.



Our Partners

American Heart Association
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition
Public Health Seattle King County
Spokane Regional Health District
Tacoma Pierce County Health Department
Washington State Department of Corrections
Department of Services for the Blind
Department of Social and Health Services
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Washington Department of Agriculture
The Healthcare Authority
Washington Department of Enterprise Services

Together we identified the need for a hands-on implementation guide and technical assistance. A Food Procurement Workgroup formed to develop the state's Healthy Nutrition Guidelines and the implementation guide. We conducted formative research to shape the content for the guide and future technical assistance. Employee feedback was essential to this process. Initial data was collected from over seven thousand state employees through a survey. The majority of respondents, 86 percent, thought it was important to have access to healthy food choices at work.

Where the road leads

In March 2014, the department finalized the implementation guide. By July 2014, 39 state executive-branch agencies will adopt and begin implementation of the nutrition guidelines for vending, cafeterias/cafes/on-site retail, meetings and events, and institutional food service. As we move forward, we are looking for funding to evaluate the impact of this work. It will be exciting to see implementation successes. We are hopeful this example will lead to similar policies in other public and private sectors that have ability to create healthier options for their workforce.



Healthy Nutrition Guidelines Logo

Lessons learned

1. Early and sustained partner engagement was a critical aspect of bringing this Executive Order to life.
 2. Understanding roles of agency staff and stakeholders is key to building a strong foundation with active partner involvement.
 3. Get the right partners at the table. Include members at all levels within the agencies including program, budget, operations staff, and leadership. Considering unique worksites, shifts, and all employees allows for implementation guidelines that are practical and feasible.
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